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CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM * LUCHE POR EL COMUNISMO * PLP

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Expose bosses' dead-end reform

MASSES OF STUDENTS WALK OUT AGAINST CAPITALIST VIOLENCE



They held signs that read "NRA=KKK" and "SOS: End Gun Violence in Schools, Overseas & on Streets," pointing to the racist, imperialist nature of the whole capitalist system.

NEW YORK, March 14—Tens of thousands of students walked out across the United States in a nationwide call for gun control after 17 students and staff members were killed last month in yet another mass school shooting, this time in Parkland, Florida. We salute these students' courage in confronting the capitalist bosses' utter disregard for the lives of young working-class people.

It's essential to recognize, however, that the latest anti-gun campaign is being orchestrated by liberals in the ruling class. Extreme alienation and anti-worker violence are integral features of the bosses' profit system. Only a communist revolution can put a stop to them.

The liberals' job is to channel workers' natural horror at mass shootings into an embrace of the Democratic Party. That's the same Democratic Party that has been led by some of the biggest mass murderers in modern times, from Lyndon Johnson to Bill Clinton to Barack Obama.

Liberal bosses try to manage student anger

In New York City, the racist, anti-student teachers union and the racist, anti-student schools chancellor collaborated seamlessly in an attempt to control the walkouts. But youth anger is substantial and hard to contain—and the ruling class fears that anger, especially among Black and Latin students. Coming out of months and years of political education and base-building, a number of young people in New York in and around Progressive Labor Party (PLP) were able to take their protest beyond the stage-managed and censored limits imposed by local education bosses.

Public schools are an important part of the rulers' state apparatus. They are designed to repress students' anger at capitalism, and to build patriotism to induce young workers to kill their class sisters and brothers in the next global conflict. At the March 14 walkouts, however, limits were pushed.

Pushing the limits

At one school, students refused to follow the directions set by the administration, which treated the protest like a fire drill. Instead, the students marched to Brooklyn Borough Hall to join hundreds of other protestors.

They held signs that read "NRA=KKK" and "SOS: End Gun Violence in Schools, Overseas & on Streets," pointing to the racist, imperialist nature of the whole capitalist system.

At another school where recent protests have been harshly criticized, with participants threatened for engaging in silent sit-ins and wearing political stickers, students secretly organized a walkout of hundreds. The administration, who presumed that the student body would have no interest in it, was shocked. The racist idea that Black and Latin students don't care about societal issues—or are being "manipulated" by adults to act because they can't possibly think for themselves—must always be exposed and confronted.

At yet another school, so many students walked out that they filled multiple streets. These students coordinated with those from other schools in the same school building to organize the walkout in spite of the Department of Education's continued attempts to divide them.

A single spark

The following day, 30 students organized a protest at an AT&T store across the street after discovering that a racist worker there had videotaped the previous day's walkout while calling the protestors "monkeys." These students quickly responded by putting out a leaflet and calling on AT&T to fire this racist. After parents joined their protest in outraged calls to local elected officials and AT&T bigwigs, the worker was indeed fired.

As a revolutionary communist party, PLP is tasked with joining the top-down reform "movements" the ruling class seeks to launch and control, and then to lead workers and youth to break out of the box of dead-end electoral "solutions" presented by capitalist misleaders. Modest but significant progress along these lines is being achieved among anti-sexist workers and youth activated in the #MeToo movement.

The Saturday after the March 14 walkouts, more than 50 New York-area members and friends of PLP attended a vigorous conference on capitalist education that brought together parents, youth, and educators. (See next issue for details.)

Another national walkout has been planned for Saturday, March 24. PLP will continue to fight alongside students, workers, and parents and infuse communist politics in the struggle.

In 1930, when the communist movement in China appeared to some to be too small to make a difference, the communist revolutionary Mao Tse-Tung referred to a traditional Chinese saying: "A single spark can start a prairie fire." This week, we saw a few sparks fly.

JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

OUR FIGHT

✰Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

✰The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

✰Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

✰While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

✰Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

✰Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

✰Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

✰Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✰Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

✰Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

Tariff fight prelude for war and fascism

The march toward World War III has accelerated with U.S. president Donald Trump's announced plans to impose tariffs—taxes on imports—on steel and aluminum. The U.S. bosses' public disagreement over Trump's plan reflects the disorder in their ranks, a weakness that limits their ability to curb the rise of China, their main imperialist rival. More than likely, this weakness will also lead to more intense fascism—for both the rulers and the working class—on the road to a broader global conflict.

While the capitalist media worldwide criticized the tariffs and warned of the possibility of a new trade war, history has shown that trade wars are constant and inevitable under capitalism—and that they serve as a prelude to world war. The Progressive Labor Party calls upon all workers to be ready to turn inter-imperialist wars into communist revolution. Understanding how the bosses' system works is necessary to defend our class against fascist attacks and to prepare workers for revolution.

Disorder in U.S. ruling class

Most of the main-wing U.S. bosses, representing finance capital, fret that Trump's tariffs, along with his pullout from the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) and his threat to renegotiate NAFTA, will isolate the U.S. on the world stage. While the proposed tariffs would actually hurt U.S. allies more than China, Trump has focused on the "national security threat" posed by China's low-priced, state-subsidized steel. Upon appeal, Mexico and Canada were tentatively taken off the list of nations subject to the tariffs, presumably to give Trump more leverage in any NAFTA talks. Even so, these allies might start thinking about pivoting toward other, more reliable partners.

More than at any time in recent memory, the U.S. capitalist class is plagued by fierce infighting. The reactions to Trump's tariffs reflect a shortsighted, opportunistic, every-person-for-themselves mentality among the bosses and their political stooges in Washington. The Republican leadership has mostly opposed the president's move, as have the major pro-imperialist media outlets and main-wing think tanks, notably the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). They understand that "free trade" is a bonanza for the capitalist class as a whole, and that it maximizes the rulers' ability to exploit the international working class. But a number of Democrats in the House of Representatives and Senate, particularly in the Rust Belt states carried by Trump in the 2016 election, have come out in support of the tariffs in an effort to pander to the diminished U.S. steel industry and Trump's "America First" base.

On March 6, Goldman Sachs alumnus and chief economic advisor Gary Cohn quit his post after losing an internal struggle to quash the tariffs. A week later, Trump fired Secretary of State and former ExxonMobil CEO Rex Tillerson. National Security Advisory H.R. McMaster, a CFR member, may be next to go. All three were considered reliable main-wing checks on the unpredictable, self-interested Trump.

With the U.S. ruling class in turmoil, president Xi Jinping—now free of any term limits—is positioned to lead Chinese imperialism and its "One Belt, One Road" plan for global supremacy for the foreseeable future. Russian president Vladimir Putin, who has outmaneuvered Obama and Trump in the war in Syria, just won his fourth six-year term in office. State capitalism in China and Russia, while betraying the two greatest workers' revolutions in history, is a more efficient system for rising fascism than the U.S. bosses' liberal "democracy." These imperialist rivals are better equipped to keep their own capitalist classes in line while subjugating workers and discouraging rebellion. By using a range of terror tactics, from long prison terms to straight murder, both China and Russia have been able to control the internal clashes that have undermined the U.S. ruling class.

Tariffs escalate confrontation with China

Since 1995, U.S. capitalists and their allies have managed international trade through the World Trade Organization (WTO). Some fear that Trump's tariffs will destroy the organization. In reality, however, it is capitalist competition that threatens the WTO.

Harping on the U.S. trade deficit in goods and services, which totaled $566 billion in 2017, the largest in nine years (Wall Street Journal, 2/6), Trump invoked the WTO's Article 21, which states that a nation can impose tariffs if it considers them "necessary for the protection of its essential security interests." Citing Article 21 ups the nationalist ante and forces other countries—both allies and adversaries—to fend for themselves. "Invoking Article [21] allows you to do anything you like, and thus endangers the whole system—which is why…it is very rarely invoked. It is a nuclear option" (Economist, 3/8).

Since joining the WTO in 2001, China has gained control over half the international market for steel and aluminum. Weeks before Trump took office, Barack Obama's administration filed a complaint with the WTO over China's subsidizing its aluminum producers. No less important, China has been able to coerce U.S. companies into "voluntarily" providing technology intelligence if they want access to China's markets. As economist Martin Feldstein of the CFR and Trilateral Commission explained, "U.S. negotiators will use the threat of imposing the tariffs on Chinese producers as a way to persuade China's government to abandon the policy of 'voluntary' technology transfers" (Project Syndicate, 3/15).

While the capitalist powers escalate their fight over trade profits, workers in these countries will bear the brunt of the competition through more expensive goods and higher unemployment as exports drop.

Trade wars lead to shooting wars

The breakdown of trade organizations like the WTO is inevitable as imperialist rivals move towards war. As civilians continue to be slaughtered in the Middle East, and the world eyes the Korean Peninsula as a potential flashpoint, the breakdown of trade organizations make all-out war all the more likely. In the current issue of Foreign Affairs (March/April 2018), Adam S. Posen notes how economic fights among capitalists can explode into military conflicts:

> *Without agreed-on rules, even minor economic disputes have the potential to set off escalating counterattacks. If the norm of separation between economic and military confrontations breaks down, economic frictions, such as Chinese theft of intellectual property or restrictions on trade with a nuclear Iran or North Korea, could turn into outright conflict.*

This would not be the first time a trade war paved the way to world war. In the run-ups to both World War I and World War II, sharpening economic competition signaled the intensification of inter-imperialist rivalry. If the U.S. expects to face the growing might of Chinese imperialism and resurgent Russian imperialism, they need to begin by putting a tighter leash on their own class. That spells more fascism, which is the open, naked rule of capitalism. It is a state that the bosses needs during crisis when their sham of democracy no longer serves them. Fascism also requires ruthless suppression of the working class.

Tariffs promote nationalism, workers need internationalism

Economically, tariffs are used to secure industries and manufacturing at home. They ram nationalism down workers' throats. By telling workers in one country that their enemies are the workers producing the same goods at a cheaper price in another country, the bosses not only hide the true nature of capitalism but prepare workers for war.

U.S. union bosses work overtime to perpetuate this myth. The AFL-CIO has applauded Trump's tariffs even though they will hurt more unionized workers than they help. Pushing nationalism, they wrote, "It's a smart way to ensure a fair economy that protects our freedoms…[Trump's] steel and aluminum tariffs…are good for working people because they punish…countries that use lax trade rules to hurt American companies and working people" (usw.org). This is the same AFL-CIO that has worked with the U.S. ruling class to overthrow governments around the world to protect super-profits from cheap labor and murderous working conditions.

We in PLP struggle with workers to develop an international, communist outlook. The real enemies are the bosses that profit from our class's labor and lay off workers by the thousand to maximize their profits. Our ability to enter the bosses' unions and struggle for internationalist, communist ideas is essential for making a communist revolution. Only by building PLP can we form one international party that will turn the bosses' wars into communist revolution.✪

Transit workers win settlement; Must continue to fight racism

WASHINGTON, DC, March 21—After a multi-year, mass struggle against racist criminal background checks at WMATA, the Washington D.C. Metro transit system, the bosses at Metro recently settled a class-action lawsuit for $6.5 million in December. This reform victory shows how necessary it is to organize among Black workers and develop a mass base.

Though some workers will benefit from the settlement, there is more fightback to come. The bosses throw reformist crumbs to our class here and there to stifle our fightback. "Winning" some settlements will never liberate workers from this capitalist hell. But the militancy workers showed here is a harbinger of their revolutionary potential.

Change in hiring

WMATA changed its relatively liberal hiring policy in late 2011 to one excluding applicants for Metro jobs based on a rigid list of prior misdemeanors and felonies. This policy kept many Black workers in the city, victims of the ruling class's racist "War on Drugs", from working in most parts of the transit system. Prior convictions kept workers from driving a bus, being a mechanic, or working on the rail. Metro management did new background checks on newly hired workers. They also began applying the rules to workers who were out of work for more than 90 days (due to illness or injury). As a result, several workers with decades of time in at Metro were fired, even though they had revealed their previous criminal record to Metro management when they were originally hired.

Progressive Labor Party (PLP) workers at Metro and PL'ers who are members of the Metropolitan Washington Public Health Association (MWPHA) joined with community members, public health workers and previously-incarcerated workers to fight back against the policy. From 2012-2015, we led rallies, attended board hearings and forced the D.C. City Council to have a special hearing on this egregious hiring policy. We met returning workers who told their grim stories, connected with lawyers, and collected over 1,000 signatures on a petition to demand an end to the policy.

In July 2014, the Washington Lawyers for Civil Rights, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and the private law firm of Arnold and Porter brought a class action suit against Metro for its racist hiring policy. It is estimated that 1,000 workers are eligible for some payment from the settlement. As a result of the settlement, Metro has agreed to use a more flexible case-by-case review of applicants, which will give previously-incarcerated workers a chance to be hired.



All struggle centered around Black transit workers

Because PLP takes on antiracist struggles and has a base in D.C.'s working class communities, as well as Metro, the Party quickly realized this was a necessary fight. In our public health work we learned from the community that the housing and employment situation for residents returning from prison was dire. From our comrades at Metro we learned of the new policy and quickly joined forces in a campaign that lasted over two years. The campaign exposed the misleaders of the transit workers' unions (ATU 689 and 1764), who refused to fight against the racist hiring policy. These misleaders have feared workers going on strike against Metro's racist actions, and continue to be scared to break the bosses' laws when only such action will lead to progress. As Mike Quill, legendary leader of NY transit workers in the 1950s and 60s once said, "If you're going to be a union leader, you have to be ready to go to jail". Not so for today's transit union sellouts!

The attack on transit workers continues to reach fever pitch. Last year, Metro General Manager Paul Wiedefeld called for privatizing system services. Privatization would erase benefits for these workers and weaken the union. But the sellout unions and fake-proletarian Democrats have also supported this racist push.

Meanwhile, local developers and other capitalists take home millions in increased value from real estate near their stations driven by the value added from access to the transit system. The bosses have rewarded the Metro managers with bloated salaries running in the hundred of thousands of dollars (General Manager Paul Wiedefeld makes over $400,000 per year), while slandering regular workers as overpaid. The average salary a worker needs to afford a two-bedroom apartment in D.C. is $103,543. (Curbed, 7/14/2017) Yet the rank and file workers can barely make rent:

> *"The median salary at WMATA is $68,544. About 7,500 (mostly union-represented) workers earn base salaries of $50,000 to $80,000, far from eye-popping amounts in a region known from strong employment rates and high housing costs." (WAMU, 2/17/2017)*

Workers here and worldwide must continue to fight institutional racism against the many Black workers who have been incarcerated and targeted in the War on Drugs. Programs in D.C. like the "jump outs" or "Stop and Frisk" in New York have created arrests and convictions that will keep workers from employment, housing and other programs. Similar background check policies limit job opportunities in hospitals, school systems, retail and construction as well as transit.

Sharp anti-racist struggles like this one lead to discussions about the need for revolution against capitalism and the fight for communism and have brought new workers into the PLP's orbit. These struggles also lay the basis for a more militant union, willing to become "strike ready" and defy the bosses and their laws. Marching on May Day in New York City under communist leadership is a critical next step for the circle of workers preparing to strike against the D.C. transit bosses.✪

Capitalist "Justice": killer kkkops go free, antiracist fighters go to jail

CHICAGO, March 19—On Monday, March 12, PL'ers joined a group of other anti-racists rallying in front of the county building to demand bail for Tyrone Williams, a Black worker arrested for expressing his outrage at the courtroom injustice of the fascist judge in the pretend trial of killer cop Jason Van Dyke. A speech by a Progressive Labor Party member, who had been arrested for similar reasons, explained the racist nature of the entire capitalist system and its courts.

From the rally we proceeded to the offices of the chief Cook County judge, who refused to meet with us. Nevertheless, before leaving we expressed our demands -- drop the charges or at least set bond for Tyrone and release him. A few days later Tyrone was indeed released on $3,000 bond, but only after a week in jail.

With many other anti-racist fighters we have been packing the courtroom in our sustained attempts to prevent Van Dyke's exoneration for killing Black teenager LaQuan McDonald in 2014 at point blank range, with no fewer than sixteen bullets. Throughout the entire struggle, we PL'ers have proclaimed our communist understanding that there can be no justice for workers under the capitalist system, but only through revolution for a system that puts workers' needs first.

PLP has been active in the movement against police terror in Chicago, terror that is always directed against the working class – primarily against Black but also against white members of our class.

Racist judge and courts strike again

The U.S. court system was set up by the slave-owning founders to dispense injustice for the working class. But Judge Vincent Gaughan, the fascist goon put in charge of Van Dyke's fake trial (with its predetermined exoneration), has ruled with a level of viciousness beyond even the usual. He has held a number of anti-racist fighters in contempt of court, including the comrade who spoke at the rally, who had the nerve to snap his fingers in the courtroom last June.

On March 8, Gaughan had Norman Hall, a Black worker, arrested for holding his hand up to ask a question. It was then that Tyrone, a member of the police reform movement, was also arrested when, in his fury at Norman's arrest, he simply blurted out, "What?" Just like that, two more Black workers were dragged deep into the bosses' criminal injustice system and held in county jail without bond.

Through such travesties does the capitalist class wield their state power over us. While the system lets a racist killer-cop roam free on bond for two and a half years, the judge imprisons two Black workers for the "crime" of being justifiably infuriated. Norman and Tyrone now face devastating consequences: loss of freedom, loss of jobs, legal fees, fines, possible probation, and the strong possibility of never being able to find work again. Meanwhile, the legal system tries to figure out how to absolve the murdering cop without incurring mass rebellion, as in Ferguson, Missouri.

Workers organize fighting response

We salute our fellow anti-racist fighters and those workers everywhere committed to organizing our class in the face of fascist terror. The bosses' ability to build the fascism they need, to mobilize the working class as soldiers in their inter-imperialist rivalry, will only be limited by the size and political leadership of the mass anti-fascist international movement. Actions such as our packing the courtrooms will develop into bigger and bolder ways to sharpen the struggle and build class consciousness. Each action we take now is part of our march toward a worldwide mass revolution for a working-class led communist society that will sweep all racist trash into the dustbin of history.

A communist society can and will smash all forms of racism, because it will have destroyed the root of oppression and exploitation on which racism rests: the capitalist profit system. In the revolutionary Soviet Union, communist leaders and the working class outlawed racism in all its forms—not just in written laws but in actual practice! Similarly, a communist society led by PLP will create a world where racist killers and crimes will be crushed quickly and severely.✪

Pakistan: Workers Fight Back, Bosses Tangled in Imperialist Rivalry

Working Class Attracted to Communist Ideas

PAKISTAN—"PLP is an international revolutionary communist party that is fighting for international communist revolution" is a statement that attracts the attention of workers. They raise many questions to understand communism, the Party and revolution. Unfortunately, they have been misguided and dragged away from the path of revolutionary struggle by misleaders, kept away from unionism and working class politics by the bosses and deprived of meeting their needs by the ruling class. Despite of all these tactics of capitalist rulers, workers are curious about an international communist revolution.

Whenever PL'ers bring communist analysis of society to a meeting, strike or rally, workers, peasants, and students express interest in changing this capitalist system.

Fight contract labor

Bosses need to keep the working class alienated from real issues, i.e. exploitation, poverty and despicable working conditions to maintain their profit system. Here, the bosses have adopted a contract system that keeps workers under the threat of unemployment. We organize workers against this vicious contract system by exposing the intentions of bosses.

Bosses' profits continue to soar since they don't have to give workers any benefit, security or insurance. Instead, workers are harassed and tortured at their workplaces. The most exploited are women and child laborers, who risk being tortured, raped, and murdered at work.

Misleaders of workers

The union leaders are no help. They act as puppets and protect the interests of the bosses by dividing the workers into different religious sects, nationalities, and ethnicities. Almost every capitalist political party has a "labor wing," which is used to segregate workers and cripple the class struggle for a communist society.

Phony left parties and organizations are also working for the capitalist class. They spread lies and confusion about communism among workers. We are determined to bring unity among workers by spreading communist ideas and recruit them to PLP.

PLP brings revolutionary line

PLP is striving to seize every opportunity to express its revolutionary line. We are involved in class struggle alongside workers, farmers and students. We are involved in organizing strikes, demonstrations, rallies, seminars and public meetings with health workers, teachers and other professional organizations. Our work gives us more courage and experience to strengthen our fight amid a hazardous social, economic and political situation.

Our communist line gives us an opportunity to explain the history of working class struggles, triumphs and defeats. It gives us strength to struggle in a society filled with mass attacks on workers.

While explaining our line, we always find that working class brothers and sisters are interested to learn how to organize ourselves against bosses and their capitalist political system. They try to understand how elections are a tool being used by the bosses to keep us divided. Pakistani bosses always kept the workers away from class struggle to avoid dissemination of class-consciousness. Every political party and trade union in Pakistan is strengthening the capitalist system one way or another.

We are fighting with full dedication and enthusiasm for international communist revolution. And we will win.✪

Pakistan pivots towards China

South Asia is important to the U.S. because of its regional interconnectivity. China's new imperialist vision for Asia to counter the U.S. is known as the "Asia-Pacific Dream." While the U.S. power in the region is mainly exercised through military-related deals and pacts, China is increasing its power primarily through economic projects with regional countries—like the new Asian Infrastructure investment Bank, One Belt One Road, and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that links the port of Gwadar to the province of Xinjiang, China. CPEC will serve as a gateway to Central Asian countries, showing Pakistan is building stronger ties with China. But where there is "soft" economic power, a hard military backing will follow.

Feeling threatened, in January, president Donald Trump used "harboring terrorism" as the reason for suspending its $1.5 billion aid to Pakistan. That same week, China announced it plans to build a navy base near the Gwadar port, its second military base after a recently-built base in Djibouti.

Pakistan is also part of the $10 billion natural gas TAPI pipeline that stretches 1,800 km from Turkmenistan to India. TAPI will demand cooperation between the historical rivals: Pakistan and India. TAPI's, a long-awaited inauguration ceremony in Afghanistan was held just last month. This reflects the U.S. bosses' consistent objective to weaken Chinese and Iranian influence in the region. The Asian Development Bank, the prime sponsor of the long-stalled pipeline, is controlled by Japan, the U.S. and the European Union.

The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) is a Pakistani think tank that studies the world's geopolitical situations and promotes the country's national interests. The following is from the report "Sino-U.S. Competition: Implications for South Asia and the Asia-Pacific" (Strategic Studies 2017, Vol. 37. no. 4):

> *The emergence of new conflicts amongst the US and its competitors, Russia and China, could turn South Asia into an arena for the pursuit of geo-strategic goals by major powers. Pakistan possesses an important geo-strategic location. It enjoys good relations with the P-5 [permanent UN members] nations and regional states including Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey and Qatar.*
>
> *Pakistan's special relationship with China gives it an advantage in the Asia-Pacific region...Pakistan should leverage the CPEC and its own geostrategic location...*
>
> *Pakistan has an interest in the stability of Sino-US relationship for the success of the CPEC.*

Pakistan is growing closer to China. As South Asia gets more entangled in the U.S.-China rivalry, it is in Pakistan's nationalist interest to play ball with both the U.S. and China for now. No country—Pakistan or India—is thus far willing to put its own national economic growth in jeopardy by risking a global conflict between the U.S. and China.✪

IWWD in Tel-Aviv: smash Sexist, racist deportations



TEL AVIV, March 9—"Residents and refugees refuse to be enemies!" "No to deportation, yes to rehabilitation!" These were among the chants of 700 multiracial women and men workers who marched through southern Tel-Aviv on International Working Women's Day. They demanded an end to the racist, sexist deportations of 40,000 African workers seeking Israeli asylum.

The marchers came from a multitude of organizations, from liberals to phony lefists to the revolutionary communist Progressive Labor Party. The women-worker-led, multiracial character of the demonstration showed the Israeli government that the workers who actually live in southern Tel-Aviv do not buy the government's lies. The workers here welcome the asylum seekers as neighbors, friends, and comrades, contrary to what the bosses' propaganda claims!

A few fascists organized a counter-demonstration, parroting the most virulent lies of anti-Black racism. They got a boost from the government, because it now repeats similar claims. The aim of the regime and its goons is to lock up asylum seekers in the Holot (officially called a "Residential Facility," but actually a prison camp) in the Negev desert, in horrid conditions - which particularly harm women and children. The Israeli government pressures them into what they call "voluntarily consent" to being deported to Rwanda and other countries like Eritrea and Sudan.

Inter-imperialist rivalry creates refugee crisis

Many African workers understand that signing the "voluntary consent" to deportation means sealing their and their families' fate of certain danger, and even death. These workers escaped Eritrea because of its murderous fascist government, and Sudan because of the wars between U.S. and Chinese imperialist-backed proxy armies vying to project one or the other imperialist's power over this strategically important region of Africa.

According to the Anti-Defamation League and the Jewish pro-migrant group HIAS, "many of those who were relocated by Israel to third countries in Africa indicate that they did not find durable protection…Some have drowned at sea en route to Europe, while others were reportedly detained, tortured and extorted by human traffickers" since, once deported to the countries they initially escaped, migrant workers are forced to move yet again (The Atlantic, 1/30).

Fascist Israeli bosses

Asylum seekers, particularly women, and especially single mothers, are super-exploited by Israeli bosses and face daily supression. Many are undocumented, and thus the employer can pay less than the minimum wage wihtout any benefits. Single women asylum seekers must work long hours to feed their children; sometimes they can only afford horrid makeshift daycare—nicknamed "children warehouses"—where their children live in misery while the mothers toil for some boss's profits.

The exploitation and oppression of migrant African workers goes hand in hand with imperialist

Continued on page 6

Fight segregation in bilingual education

WASHINGTON, DC—A passerby at 8 in the morning might see a multiracial groups of students enter a public school building. But inside school, segregation dominates, as most of the Black and Latin children (and many low-income working class whites) end up in a lower 'track' with less access to enrichment resources. I am engaged in a struggle around bilingual education that, in its own way, is promoting segregation by race, class, and ethnicity.

Jim Crow segregation and its new forms

In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation in schools had to end because "separate" was inherently unequal. This reversed the previous right of governments to mandate segregated facilities, and has been hailed as an historic step away from institutional racism.

But capitalists require a divided working class to exploit us more effectively. So school systems have created new, internal forms of segregation. The most common is 'ability tracks' within a school. Wealthy parents (mainly white) get their kids extra tutoring and enrichment that are not available to their working-class peers. These students are then placed in "advanced" learning tracks based on spurious test scores and guidance counselor advice.

Local governments have also maintained segregation through a policy of "neighborhood schools", which reflect the segregated housing patterns of most communities. During the 1960s and 70s, as bussing was mandated to help overcome these racist patterns, the bosses used scare tactics to inflame racist attitudes by white parents, further dividing the working class. Today, most bussing programs have ended and schools are increasingly segregated by race and ethnicity. Children from low-income families, disproportionately Black, Latin, and/or immigrant, end up with fewer resources in their schools and lower opportunities for future success.

Bilingual education wrecked by racism

Language skills and general learning is best accomplished in a dual immersion process whereby half the school day is taught in Spanish and half in English with students from both language groups.

The elementary school where I teach has a student population that is 75 percent immigrant and 65 percent Latin. The school established a 'partial immersion' program aimed at students whose first language is English. Spanish was used to teach math and science. Students learned these subjects and also acquired Spanish skills. The program was designed to attract mostly white, affluent students. Children whose first language is Spanish were actively denied spots in this program. Latin students were taught only in English –in spite of extensive research showing that native language literacy improves overall academic progress.

This outright racist policy of flagrantly denying Latin families access to the partial immersion program was quietly ended when a few anti-racist teachers and parents protested this as a civil rights problem. We suggested a truly bilingual program —dual immersion—but policy makers continued segregation, citing budget constraints.

Segregation also reared its ugly head in the advanced math program. At first this special program was 90 percent white in a school where less than 15 percent of the population is white. Parents and teachers pushed back, forcing the administration to enroll more Black and Latin children. This required a struggle because racist segregation is so deeply built into the DNA of capitalism.

The partial immersion program ensured segregation of children by language as early as the age of five. Children learn early on that the system is designed to serve only some. This experience contradicts the idea that the system of public schooling in the United States is designed to educate everyone. People wonder why schools are failing Black and Latin children? Why are schools denying equal educational opportunities to low-income children? Why are people stuck in poverty? The educational system reinforces these inequalities generated by

Continued on page 6

The December protests: class struggle in Iran

This past December, a rebellion began in Iran that exposed the myth of a passive working class-like the rebellions in Ferguson and Baltimore. Iran, like the U.S., Russia, China and every capitalist country in the world, is a class-divided society with exploited workers and oppressed minority populations on the one hand, and exploiters who use religion to enslave on the other.

Back in 2009, there was a "Green Movement" in Iran with demonstrations numbering up to three million workers. This anti-government movement was manipulated by the U.S. and European Union to overthrow then-President Ahmadinejad. The Green Movement's leadership was made up of politicians and local capitalists clamoring for U.S. investments.

Iranian leaders have blamed the December protests on the U.S. CIA, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and even ISIS. While some combination of U.S.-Saudi involvement may be true, despite Donald Trump and U.S. bosses' cheers at the revolt, workers and students can function outside the limits of U.S. control.

Economic underpinning of protests

Like the 2015 uprising in Baltimore against racist police terror, many battles preceded the surge of December 2017.

Workers have engaged in years of strikes, labor actions, and protests. Nurses, bus drivers, truck drivers, Teheran tire workers, sugar cane workers, petrochemical workers, bakers in Sanandaj (Kurdistan), and tractor-manufacturing workers in Tabriz have struggled as the economy deteriorated. Unions are illegal, and workers are generally on "temporary contracts" rather than "secure" jobs, allowing instant dismissal.

Since 1988, International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans to Iran required the slashing of workers' benefits. Government subsidies for petroleum, water, electricity, and bread accounted for 27 percent of the GDP in 2007, but they were changed to direct cash transfers, allowing the "free market" to set (rising) commodity prices. In 2014, even the cash transfers were cut back. This part of the budget declined to 3.4 percent in 2014, and current Iranian President Rouhani's December budget entailed even greater cuts.

Now, half the population is impoverished, with 10-12 million workers in extreme poverty. Overall, workers makes 15 percent less than they did 10 years ago. The government estimates that $1,000 per year is needed for a family of three to survive, but it set the minimum wage at a third of this. Youth unemployment is 30 percent, and inflation is 15 percent per year, with prices of basics like chicken and eggs increasing 30-40 percent per year. Meanwhile, mullahs (religious leaders) get richer and flaunt their wealth, similar to the U.S.

A rift between President Rouhani and the hardline mullahs led to the initial December 28 demonstration, in Mashhad. Rouhani had exposed the billions in the annual budget intended for Islamic institutions, including the military's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, and the proposed termination of subsidies for millions of workers ($5.3 billion), 50 percent higher fuel prices, privatized schools, and infrastructure cuts of $3.1 billion. The nuclear deal with the U.S. and EU was expected to end sanctions and improve the standard of living, but the budget did the opposite.

Hardline mullahs organized the rally, but the workers and students grew to tens of thousands, in scores of cities, and attacked the entire capitalist regime, chanting, "People beg while Mullahs rule like gods!" and "Death to the Dictator" (Supreme Ayatollah Khamenei). Police killed 22 protesters and arrested 2,000 (90 percent 25 years old or younger). Social media was virtually shut down.

The Iranian communist movement

The Tudeh party, formed shortly after the Russian Revolution of 1917, built trade unions. By the end of World War II, it earned a significant base among workers, as in many countries, based on the Soviet Union's defeat of the Nazis. However, the two-stage theory of revolution (socialism before communism) led to Tudeh's support of a liberal capitalist named Mohammad Mossadegh to head the overthrow of the Shah, the puppet ruler of the British imperialists. Mossadegh quickly turned on Tudeh at the behest of US rulers, and he was in turn overthrown by the CIA in 1953, who reinstalled the Shah. Tudeh retained working-class support, but within four years, Khomeini executed masses of pro-communist workers, using CIA lists.

Many left and formed new communist organizations, however, and some of these workers have been in contact with the Progressive Labor Party.

Implications of the current uprising

Building the revolutionary communist PLP is the key task and only solution for workers from Ferguson to Teheran. As with many recent uprisings—from the 2012 "Arab Spring" revolts to the rebellions in Ferguson and Baltimore—the December protests may result in lower gas prices, but will bring no permanent solution to the workers' chronic misery under this religious fascist state.

The uprisings world-over show that workers everywhere face the same exploitation, racism, and segregation that impedes the class war. Lenin argued that communist revolution required three things: that workers couldn't live the same old way; bosses couldn't rule the same old way; and a communist party fighting for armed revolution with deep roots in the working class. In Iran, as is the case globally, the first two are near fulfillment, but a mass PLP is still missing there—all the more reason to continue to organize!✪

Flaunting wealth while workers starve and communists are murdered

The Iranian mullahs are far from simple religious figures. They are exploitative capitalists and their offspring flaunt their wealth like Trump's family. In one week in May 2015, there were three deadly road accidents involving Porsches, Ferraris and Maseratis driven by super-rich young Iranians. These sons and daughters of the ayatollahs live in multi-million-dollar luxury apartments and wear branded clothes. An Instagram page, Rich Kids of Tehran shows young men posing next to private planes and helicopters, wearing expensive Rolex watches and holding gold-plated mobile phones, plus young women wearing ball gowns in luxury mansions with private cinema screens and swimming pools.

The owner of the yellow Maserati killed in one accident was the grandson of ayatollah Rabbani Shirazi, who was sent by Khomeini in the early 1980s to oversee attacks on villages where leftwing groups had fled from the Islamic regime's terror. He assisted in the execution of communists in Kurdistan and Khuzestan.

As one supporter of the December protests declared, "The clerics are the most unproductive leeches of our society, yet their sons, in upper-class neighborhoods of Tehran and other big cities, own more Bugatti's and Lamborghini's per capita than you'd see in the streets of Monaco. Where did all that wealth come from? It was all stolen from our national coffers, and the youth of our country have risen up to stop the thievery."

From Iran to the U.S., smash capitalism and its decadent, entitled, and murderous rulers!

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

Janus case shows splits in the ruling class

On February 24, I joined several thousand workers at Foley Square in NYC to protest the attack on unions represented by the Janus v. AFSCME Supreme Court case, which is expected to end the collection of "agency fees," the money non-members pay to unions to represent them in bargaining and contract enforcement. This is part of a decades-long project to weaken unions through "right-to-work" laws and other obstacles to union representation. The targets in the Janus case are public sector unions, because 34.4 percent of government employees are unionized, compared to only 6.5 percent in the private sector. Right-wing billionaires like the Koch brothers, the Walton and Coors families, and Richard Uihlein are paying the legal expenses of the Janus plaintiffs. The capitalists want to:

1. Weaken public unions in order to reduce wages, benefits and job protections of members. The median earnings for a two-income, non-union family are currently $400 a week less than that of a union family. Reducing the pay, health benefits and pensions of government workers is part of a larger plan to reduce taxes on corporations and the very rich.

2. Reduce the influence of public unions in lobbying for more money for education, health care and other social services.

Two days later, I traveled with members of my union to demonstrate on the steps of the Supreme Court. Hundreds of unionists from AFSCME, SEIU, TWU, CWA, AFT and NEA chanted "The Workers United Will Never Be Defeated," drowning out the small group of college Republicans and Heritage Foundation staff who chanted "Stand With Mark" (Mark Janus is the right-wing worker whose name is on the suit). The pro-Janus crowd was almost all-white, while our group was multiracial. It's significant since Black workers are 30 percent more likely than whites to have a public sector job. So the Janus attack on public unions is also racist.

Everyone in our union group realized that our rally was too little, too late. For months, the leaders of the major public unions failed to mobilize their members for militant action. Many unions didn't even organize members to come to the last-minute rallies. What if millions of public workers had walked off the job like the West Virginia teachers did? Then the conversation at the Supreme Court would have been a little different.

A section of the U.S. bosses want to cripple the labor unions. This has been their aim for decades. The Koch family helped form the Tea Party. In 1955, Koch was one of the founders of the National Right to Work Committee, one of the anti-labor organizations bringing the current Janus suit.

Other capitalists worry that crippling unions will make it harder for labor leaders to maintain "labor peace" and persuade their member to accept "no-strike pledges." The AFSCME lawyer presenting the anti-Janus argument at the Supreme Court was explicit: "Union security is the tradeoff for no strikes. And so if you were to override Abood, you can raise an untold specter of labor unrest throughout the country."

The New York Times, and capitalists like Warren Buffet, are worried that weakened public unions will be less able to support the Democratic Party, which derails social protest and rebellion by offering false hope that capitalism can be reformed. Beneath this is their worry that millions of workers could reject capitalism and embrace communist leaders, who led many of the unions in the past.

These rulers are worried not only about the "specter of labor unrest," but about the "specter of communism" that continues to haunt them 170 years after Marx wrote The Communist Manifesto. As communists, we are active in unions because we know Marx was right, that workers' revolution offers us the only viable future.

★★★★★

The Supreme Court is not your friend

Most working class youth are lied to and taught that the court is a fair part of the state apparatus—the government of the capitalist class—unlike squabbling congress, filled with bought-and-sold sleazy politicians, or a presidency occupied by a racist fool. We are told that the court rises above both the legislative and executive branches as *the* judge of both.

Beneath the veneer of impartiality, the Supreme Court historically and consistently serves the interest of the capitalists who own all the means of producing economic value. The function of the Supreme Court is to adjudicate important disputes about the set of rules that guarantee capitalist class control over both the economy and government. Some of those disputes are between different wings or different policies competing for dominance within the ruling class; others are disputes between capitalists and workers.

The history of the Supreme Court is one of protecting the interests of the wealthy owners. That was clear in 1857, when the Court protected the interests of wealthy slave owners in the Dred Scott case, when it ruled that any of the four million slaves brought to a "free state" (one that had abolished slavery) remained the property of his or her owner. In the 2010 Citizens United case, the court ruled that corporations could not be limited in how much money they donated to political campaigns, making it even easier for billionaires to maintain control over who's elected to congress and for the presidency.

All of the current Supreme Court Justices are graduates of law schools at Harvard, Yale or Columbia, universities that have trained generations of executives of major U.S. corporations and leading members of the U.S. political class. Before being named to the court, most of the Justices served as corporate lawyers and are naturally friendly to business. The Roberts Court (named after Chief Justice John Roberts) deepens this tradition. A study published in the Minnesota Law Review that rigorously examined 2,000 decisions found the court to be "far friendlier to business than those of any court since at least World War II."

In the Janus v. AFSCME case, the Court is poised to hand a victory to the wing led by the Koch Brothers and the Walton Family. They would prefer to see unions demolished, as opposed to the Rockefellers, Morgans and other families, who would keep unions in their tame and controlled state.

Whatever the decision in Janus, it's important for workers to realize how all three branches of government are used against us.

It is we, the workers of the whole world, who will hold the key to which class rules. We have nothing to lose but our chains, and the majesty of the Supreme Courts of the world will go the way of the divine right of kings when workers led by the communist PLP break the chains of the wage and profit system!

★★★★★

Anti-deportation Protests

Continued from page 4

rivalry. As one of U.S. imperialism's most important pillars of control in the Middle East, and a regional imperialist in its own right, Israel's growing regional rivalry with Iran has spurred fascism to climb to new heights. This week, the Israeli prosecutors offered a plea deal to racists who lynched and murdered Abtum Zarhum, an African asylum seeker, in 2016. They will only some short "community service" sentences rather than pay for their crimes. Zarhum happened to be around the Beersheba central bus station when a terrorist attack totally unrelated to him occurred. Fascist forces suspected him to be the terrorist, and shot and injured him. While he was bleeding on the ground, a lynch mob of Israelis came and beat him to death, included off-duty cops. These lynch mob fascists will now walk free.

Israeli and migrant worker unity resists fascism

The workers of south Tel-Aviv shows us a glimpse of resistance. This International Working Women's Day showed that it's women workers taking the lead of this anti-fascist fightback.

For these reasons the resident and migrant unity of southern Tel-Aviv is all the more powerful, inspiring, and vital for all workers to know about and support. As dark as the fascist night is in Israel, and as the threats of wider regional and world wars grow, the working-class fightback here show the potential of PLP's communist ideas of internationalism, women leadership, multiracial unity and militant antiracist fightback taking root.

One of the women speakers at the demonstration connected the growing displacement of Israeli workers with the growing movement of Israeli citizens and rabbis who commit to hiding refugees in their homes: "The deportation of asylum seekers is just one step before they deport us, long-term residents of southern Tel Aviv, in favor of the tycoons [capitalists]" (972mag.com, 3/9).

Capitalism breeds racism and sexism. Along with imperialism these are the legs upon which this rotten profit system walks. PLP fights alongside the struggle in southern Tel-Aviv and will continue to fight back while raising our ideas of and revolution. Join PLP and expel the bosses.✪

Bilingual Segregation

Continued from page 5

capitalism.

Education departments talk out of both sides of their proverbial mouths. They hypocritically demand that teachers "close the achievement gap" and demonstrate "cultural competency" yet policy makers mandate racist, divisive policies.

Reform comes with a bitter pill

This country is now starting a dual-immersion program, where 50 percent primary-English speakers and 50 percent primary-Spanish speakers will be placed in the same classes and receive half of their instruction in one language and the other half in the second language. This is the great way for kids to become bi-literate and academically successful. When implemented correctly, it is a win-win situation for all kids. In theory, the Latin kids will get access to literacy development in their first language and anti-racists should be excited! We're getting the bilingual program we wanted.

However, capitalist reforms come with a bitter pill. The partial immersion program that had attracted affluent families to our school is being moved to a more affluent neighborhood where they will get the whole day in Spanish. Thus segregation prevails and resource disparities between schools will grow. The possibility that our school will become integrated by race, ethnicity, and immigrant status will once again be remote.

Revolutionary change required

Communists in the schools must fight all forms of segregation because it weakens all working class students and families in the class struggle. Teachers must constantly resist all the forces working to segregate and re-segregate our schools. We must build a multiracial base with parents, and grow these battles into a mass movement for improved education and ultimately a new system of communism. Then the possibilities for the blossoming of our children will be endless.✪

Fascism U.S. style: radiation experiments on workers and youth





Hitler would have been proud of how U.S. rulers conducted a series of human radiation experiments on thousands of U.S. citizens during and after World War II. Author Eileen Welsome's book *The Plutonium Files* takes its name from one experiment involving the injection of plutonium on 18 patients from 1945 to 1947. Almost all were given 5 micrograms (two with 94 micrograms) when the "tolerance dose" of plutonium was listed as 1 microgram. (All quotes are from Welsome's book.)

The Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) supervised a "vast network of national laboratories, universities and hospitals that would investigate every imaginable effect of radiation." The government succeeded in keeping its role secret from the public as well as from the patients themselves. Hundreds of scientists and technicians who developed the atomic bomb were exposed to radioactive substances; some like plutonium were new and had unknown health effects. After the U.S. dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, murdering a quarter of a million civilians, U.S. officials went to Japan to observe the effects on survivors.

In 1947 at the Nuremberg trials of Nazi war criminals, the prosecutors advanced the code that conducting such experiments without informing the subjects of their nature and hazards constituted a war crime. Yet "Thousands of human radiation experiments, many…without therapeutic benefit, were funded by the AEC" during 30 years of the Cold War. This included a proposal in 1949 to expose prisoners serving life sentences to 150 roentgens units of radiation to help determine how much radiation an air crew could tolerate while piloting an aircraft propelled by nuclear energy. Experiments continued for years:

- Eight hundred and twenty-nine pregnant women at the Vanderbilt University Hospital Prenatal Clinic were given radioactive iron "cocktails" and told they "contained something nutritious that would benefit their babies";
- From 1946 to 1973, 74 boys at the Ferndale State School in Waltham, Mass., were given amounts of radioactive iron or calcium in their oatmeal by MIT scientists with the AEC's support;
- Between 2,000 to 3,000 enlisted men participated in experiments during the U.S. aboveground nuclear testing program in Nevada. Soldiers were moved as close as two miles from ground zero, a few within a mile;
- From 1963 to 1971, over 100 prisoners in Oregon and Washington states "volunteered" to have their testicles exposed to as much as 600 rads of radiation;
- "Operation Sunshine" sought to discover the hazards from fallout by collecting and analyzing "the body parts of more than 15,000 humans" often without permission from next of kin;
- Between 1960 and 1973, the Defense Atomic Support Agency contracted with the Cincinnati General Hospital to expose over 90 cancer patients to total body irradiation.

Target Black and Poor White Women and Youth

In the Cincinnati study, the majority of patients were Black, at Vanderbilt poor white women and at Ferndale and Oregon working-class youth and prisoners. Some studies like the total body irradiation experiments "caused intense suffering and premature deaths in some patients."

The AEC was primarily concerned that revealing the experiments might adversely affect domestic public opinion. President Eisenhower advised the AEC "to keep the public 'confused' about different types of radiation hazards." (Paul Boyer, *The Bombs Earl Light*) A primary reason soldiers were sent into Nevada's nuclear test zone was to show their parents back home there was nothing to fear from radioactive fallout. According to the chair of the Pentagon's Medical Policy Council, the soldiers themselves were terrified of entering the area that had been subject to nuclear radiation. The exercise sought to "dispel a fear that is…entirely groundless" and thus mobilize the soldiers to march into a nuclear strike zone to fight a battle against an equally irradiated enemy." (Moreno, "Undue Risks: Secret State Experiments on Humans, p. 164)

People outside the test zones got "equal treatment": "Even though scientists were aware that fallout from the tests could pose serious hazards to nearby communities, they chose not to evacuate residents because they apparently feared such a move would harm public relations and jeopardize the test site." A House Committee released a report on 31 human radiation experiments involving 700 people showing that they were conducted without informed consent and had been covered up for decades.

The fact that the U.S. ruling-class has conducted these barbarous fascistic experiments should leave no doubt that it will be ready to kill millions in nuclear war in order to preserve its profit system. All the more reason for a communist-led international working class to organize a revolution to wipe out capitalism forever.✪

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

Trump's education secretary promotes virulent racism

NYT (op-ed, Michelle Goldberg), 3/13 — CBS's "60 Minutes" broadcast an interview…with Betsy DeVos,…Trump's education secretary and one of the richest members of his very rich cabinet…. DeVos struggled to answer very basic questions…. Why schools in Michigan, her home state, have largely gotten worse since the widespread introduction of the school choice policies she lobbied for….DeVos is oblivious about "race…." refused to even admit that…[it] plays a role in discipline….

…Evidence…says minority students are more likely than white students in similar situations to be written up and disciplined….

…White kids are punished for classroom disruption by a trip to the principal's office, while for black kids they call in the cops. DeVos refused to say such a discrepancy is wrong….

…Black public school students are suspended at 3.8 times the rate of white students…. [In] one elementary school…a black girl was suspended for poking a student with a pencil. When a white girl in the same grade threw a rock that hit another child in the head and broke the teacher's sunglasses, she was made to help the teacher clean the classroom during lunch.

China's 'communist' billionaire lawmakers' 'Great Leap Forward'

NYT, 3/3 — …Chinese lawmakers have plenty of money — $650 billion of it — and that's growing….

…The net worth of the 153 members of China's Parliament and its advisory body…amounts to $650 billion, up by nearly a third from a year ago….

…The wealth of the nation's lawmakers has kept soaring. In 2017, it topped $500 billion, more than doubling from the year before….

…China added 210 billionaires over the past year — about four a week — 40 percent more than the United States….The ["]Communist["] Party, which was founded to work for the interests of workers and stamp out capitalism, welcomed businesspeople into the party more than a decade ago.

Ivanka Trump's shoe workers slave away at $30 a month

(NYT, 2/11) — …Producers of Ivanka Trump's shoes recently relocated,…chasing a more desperate work force "content" to work for a pittance (roughly $30 a month) rather than paying the rising wages of their predecessors….

[Meanwhile] when wages rise because of…labor unrest, the Chinese government is happy to help Apple and others by handing out tax breaks and transportation projects to spur new, lower-paying factories in China's hinterlands. No such help is on tap for a worker…living in places like Flint, Michigan, which can't even guarantee the water is safe.

National Geographic spread extraordinary racism

NYT, 3/14 — "Through most of its history, National Geographic…reproduced a racial hierarchy with brown and black people at the bottom, and white people at the top."

….Black people were presented as static, primitive and non-technological, often unclothed or presented as savages….That image…shaped how the magazine's readers — largely white and middle class — perceived black people….

…Blatant examples of racism includ[ed] a 1916 story about Australia that included the photo caption: "South Australian Blackfellows: These savages rank lowest in intelligence of all human beings…."

The magazine was far from alone in racist coverage…but it was considered a leader in photography.

U.S. workers' poverty among world's deepest

NYT (op-ed, Angus Deaton), 1/25 —There are 5.3 million Americans who are absolutely poor by global standards….It is more than in Nepal (2.5 million)….It is precisely the cost and difficulty of housing that makes for so much misery for so many Americans, and it is precisely these costs that are missed in the World Bank's global counts….

…Essentials of health are more likely to be lacking for poorer Americans and there are places — the Mississippi Delta and much of Appalachia — where life expectancy is lower than in Bangladesh and Vietnam.

Many Americans, especially whites with no more than a high school education, have seen worsening health….For this group life expectancy is falling; mortality rates from drugs, alcohol and suicide are rising…There are millions of Americans whose suffering, through material poverty and poor health is as bad or worse than that of poor people in Africa or in Asia….

…It is time to stop thinking that only non-Americans are truly poor….especially when they are as destitute as the world's poorest people.

BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION CENTENNIAL SERIES

COMMUNISM MEANS EQUALITY FOR WOMEN AND MEN

This celebratory column is in honor of the 100th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution and the world communist movement of the 20th century. We mainly examine its triumphs. We welcome your comments and criticisms, and encourage all readers to discuss this period of history with their friends, classmates, co-workers, family, and comrades.

One hundred years ago The Messenger, a Black U.S. socialist monthly, editorialized:

> *Soviet government proceeds apace. It bids fair to sweep over the whole world! The sooner the better. On with the dance!*

U.S. Socialist labor leader Eugene V. Debs declared:

> *The common people of Russia came into power, the peasants, the toilers, the soldiers, and they proceeded as best they could to establish a government of the people. It may be that the much-despised Bolsheviks may fail at last, but let me say to you that they have written a chapter of glorious history. It will stand to their eternal credit.*

These words are more important today than ever. We hear everywhere that "communism is dead," and it is true that the Soviet Union and its allies in Eastern Europe abandoned the goal of communism and are openly capitalist market economies.

Soviet revolutionaries and the communist movement more broadly made mistakes that led to the restoration of capitalism. Workers everywhere must learn from these mistakes—as well as from the many victories of the Bolshevik revolution and the world communist movement—in order to move forward. In the future, we must build a fully egalitarian society. It is necessary to reorganize society along the communist principle "from each according to ability, to each according to need." The PLP has come to realize that nationalism, racism, sexism, and acceptance of inequality of any sort are fatal to the working class movement. "On with the dance!"



Brooklyn: April 28 at 11:30 AM. intersection of Hillel Pl & Flatbush Ave
Chicago: April 28 at 1:30 PM. intersection of 47 St and Cottage Grove Ave

Communist revolutionaries fight sexism

You can learn a lot about a society by looking at the position of its women. V. I. Lenin, Alexandra Kollontai, Nadezhda Krupskaya, Elena Stasova, and many, many other Soviet leaders had long recognized that the active participation of women, especially working-class women, was absolutely necessary to the success of their movement.

Lenin wrote:

> *Unless women are brought to take an independent part not only in political life generally, but also in daily and universal public service, it is no use talking about full and stable democracy, let alone socialism.*

Kollontai wrote:

> *Without the participation of women the October Revolution could not have brought the Red Flag to victory.*

The Bolsheviks recognized that to win over large numbers of women they would have to do two things: (a) educate them politically in the principles and practical work of communist revolution; and (2) fight for reform demands that would attack the profoundly and viciously sexist social system that ground down women workers (especially among the Asian minorities) even more harshly than their brothers.

They did both. The Bolshevik Party program of 1902 already demanded "full equality for all citizens, irrespective of sex, religion, or race." And when the government of workers, peasants, and soldiers took power in November, 1917, it quickly moved to make this a reality.

Antisexist accomplishments

Among the accomplishments of the first few years of the Russian Revolution were:

• A large-scale system of crèches (nurseries) and "children's palaces" was begun to provide for a "social upbringing" for the children and to free women to participate fully in political and factory work;

• Guaranteed maternity leave and special safeguards of working conditions;

• Divorce easily available on demand of either spouse, freeing women from the tyranny of abusive husbands and fathers;

• In January, 1918, in response to demands of women workers and peasants, lying-in hospitals (special hospitals for childbirth) were reorganized to guarantee the best available care for all women, regardless of ability to pay, "thereby ending," as Kollontai put it, "the inequality between poor and prosperous expectant and nursing mothers";

• Improved midwifery training and new regulations were implemented to protect women "against a view which saw them as 'sacrifices to science' on whom unskilled midwives and young medical students gained practice";

• Abortion was legalized;

• A mass campaign was organized in 1918 to draw women workers into politics. Three hundred delegates were expected at the first congress of women workers, held in November 1918—but 1,147 came! They formulated a plan to turn "women workers and peasants into conscious and active communists" on a large scale;

• Women were active with the Red Army, often serving at the front. The women workers of Petrograd (later renamed Leningrad) served by the thousands in machine-gun companies, in medical and communications units, and in constructing fortifications.

Soviet women continued to advance throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Increasing numbers of women became scientists, engineers, skilled workers and political leaders. One of the most spectacular accomplishments of workers' power was the freeing of Central Asian women from the suffocating veils that had for centuries symbolized their virtual enslavement.

Need working women in leadership

But serious mistakes were made too. For one, the communist movement consistently underestimated the importance of a sharp ideological struggle for equality, in this case the fight against sexism within the ranks of the working class. This was a mistake. As late as 1921, only 10 percent of the Party members were women, and women occupied only a tiny minority of leadership positions throughout the socialist period.

And while the Soviet woman was increasingly visible in public life, her "natural obligation" was still said in 1946 to be "that of bringing up her children and mistress of her home."

Still, the Bolshevik Revolution of November, 1917, was, as Debs put it, "a chapter of glorious history" for women as well as for male workers. "To have failed to see the hope in the Russian Revolution," wrote The San Francisco Bulletin war correspondent Bessie Beatty a century ago, "is to be as a blind man looking at a sun rise."

Her words are still true today. The sky may be cloudy, but the struggle for communism continues. And the working class will win!✪